

### Arthur and the Sword in the Stone

*The legend of King Arthur dates back to Anglo-Saxon times. There may have once been a leader called Arthur but over thousands of years the story has been added to and we can't be sure which parts are fact and which are fiction. Here is the story of how Arthur became king:*

Sadness descended over Britain as news spread of the death of King Uther. But after the sadness, quickly came anger and arguments about who should be the next king. None of the powerful knights or nobles knew about Uther's son, Arthur, who had been sent away to keep him safe from attacking Saxon armies.

Fights raged for many months until one freezing morning when the frost covered the trees like a crystal white blanket, a great stone appeared. It lay in front of the ancient church of St Paul and thrust deep into the stone was a glittering sword. When the knights came closer, they could read a message carved into the shining metal of the blade saying, "Whoever pulls this sword from the stone is the rightful King of England."

Many times they tried to wrench the sword from the stone. They tugged and heaved and strained with all their might. But it was no use. The sword would not budge for any of them.

Years passed and young Arthur was dashing through the city, looking for a sword. His foster brother Kay was due to fight in a competition but had lost his sword. Suddenly, Arthur's eyes fell upon the stone, the metal of the sword glistening in the early morning sunlight. He stepped towards the sword, fallen leaves crunching under his steady footsteps. Reaching out, he clasped the jewelled handle of the weapon and pulled. The sword slid out like a knife gliding through butter.

### Questions

1. Why were the knights and nobles angry after King Uther died?
2. The sword is described as "glittering" (line 10). Why do you think this is?
3. What time of year was it when the sword appeared? Explain how you can tell.
4. The author uses a lot of words for "pulled". List the ones that you can find.
5. Why do you think the other men failed to wrench the sword from the stone?
6. The extract says that the sword "slid out like a knife gliding through butter" (line 27). Explain why you think this is.
7. After reading this extract, explain what you think might happen next.

### Answers

1. The knights and nobles were angry because they didn't know about Uther's son, Arthur.
2. Any appropriate answer. E.g. I think the sword is described as glittering because it was new and filled with diamonds and jewels.
3. E.g. I know that it was winter when the sword appeared because on line 8 the extract describes frost covering the trees.
4. The author uses these synonyms of pulled: wrench, tugged, heaved and strained.
5. Any appropriate answers. E.g. The men were unable to pull the sword out of the stone because they were not the true king of England.
6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. The sword slid out like a knife gliding through butter because it was very easy for Arthur to pull it out.
7. Any appropriate answer. If there is time, share responses to this question.